

After advocating throughout the past year for high-speed rail funding that would bring increased economic development and new jobs to her district, Rep. Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) announced today that \$1,234,250,000 of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding will be dedicated to the Chicago to St. Louis corridor for high-speed rail in Illinois.

"An investment of this magnitude could not have come at a better time for Illinois. I've worked hard to make this a reality for my constituents, both because it offers another transportation option for our communities, and because we need the jobs," said Halvorson.

"Whether I'm talking with local officials or my neighbors, people are excited about the prospect of bringing high-speed rail to our area. Small business owners can attract new customers, and continue to grow and create jobs. I will continue to fight for additional investments in not only high-speed rail, but other infrastructure projects that can spur development and grow jobs."

The \$1,234,250,000 secured in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is part of a larger \$8 billion national investment in high-speed rail that Halvorson supported when the Act passed last year. Halvorson previously sent direct appeals to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to have high-speed rail included in the stimulus bill, and a subsequent letter to increase funding in the final bill.

"I hope to see these funds putting people to work as soon as possible. This is very important moment for our state-and especially for our communities along the corridor like Joliet and Bloomington-Normal," said Halvorson.

"This is great news for Will County," said Larry Walsh, Will County Executive. "Congresswoman Halvorson has been a leader in fighting for high-speed rail, and her constituents will benefit from it for years to come."

Halvorson has a strong track record in working to increase investment in infrastructure, and has worked closely with local officials to bring federal investments to the 11th District. She hosted meetings in Joliet and Bloomington-Normal in late summer of 2009 to build support among local communities on the corridor and coordinate on the application.

Halvorson also recently led an effort to increase funding in the recently passed fiscal year 2010

transportation bill to ensure continued investments in high-speed rail. "I appreciate all of the hard work our local officials did to help us make this a reality," said Halvorson.

"I've been an advocate of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor and the Normal multi-modal transportation especially," said State Rep. Dan Brady (R-Bloomington) "I've appreciated the support that Congresswoman Halvorson and the Administration have been able to direct towards that."

Joliet Mayor Art Schultz said, "This funding will bring more jobs, more investment, and more tourists to Joliet. Congresswoman Halvorson's efforts to bring this investment will pay big dividends for our city, our businesses, and our families."

State Senator A.J. Wilhelmi (D-Joliet) said, "Will County needs jobs, and this funding means jobs and economic investment. I'm glad to see this investment coming to our communities, and the benefits it will mean for our families."

"We are elated that our vision of high-speed passenger rail service for our community and the Central Illinois region will soon be a reality. This service will most certainly fuel new private investment in our region, creating needed jobs and new economic opportunities for years to come," said City of Normal Mayor Chris Koos.

Mayor Steve Stockton, City of Bloomington said, "Illinois will now benefit from better connections between our cities with less pollution and dependence on oil -- something that has been successfully implemented in both Europe and Asia."